



Publicity Pack

Why do we need publicity?

Red Rope needs publicity in order to raise the profile of the organisation, to put our views across, and to recruit new members.

Why do we need new members?

- There are lots of people out there who would like to join Red Rope - if only they knew about it!
- A certain number of members leave Red Rope every year - for a variety of reasons: new job, new interests, change of address, moving abroad - and we need to replace them.
- More members means a wider programme of activities for everyone, across more regions of the UK.
- New members bring new ideas, skills and enthusiasm.
- Members get older each year! We need young members in order to keep a wide age range in the club.

Red Rope includes socialists, walkers, climbers, and also vegetarians, environmentalists, members of minority groups, single parents, supporters of various campaigning and support groups. When you are recruiting new members, bear in mind the range of different groups and sections of society that they might belong to.

How to use this pack

All of us have good ideas about what publicity Red Rope needs, things that we know have worked in our own regions, or for other groups we belong to.

This pack has collected together lots of these good ideas from a workshop of Red Rope members. Use these to help plan your own local publicity.

How can we reach new members?

The following list is just to get you started with ideas for publicising Red Rope in your local area:

- CHECKLIST
- Put up **posters and leaflets** in local places
A list of good places to publicise is in this pack →
- Send **press releases** to local newspapers and magazines
See our tips for writing press releases →
- Make sure your Red Rope contact details are listed in **directories and databases**
See the 'good places to publicise' list for ideas →
- Get day walks, evening walks and other events into **local listings**
- Do you have a **social programme**? This can be a good way of attracting people and publicising Red Rope
See our suggestions for social events →
- Negotiate a **discount** with a local outdoor leisure shop. They might put up your poster, and it could be a good perk to encourage people to join – and renew membership!
- Make contact with **local like-minded groups** and arrange exchange mailings and joint events.
- If there is a local hot topic or campaign issue - **write a letter to the press**, either from the local secretary or simply as a member of Red Rope.
- Contact your local **radio station** with information about your activities
- Don't forget **the Internet** - lots of people have computers at home or at work. The address of the Red Rope website is:
www.redrope.org.uk

Note: The National Committee also does publicity work - at the end of this pack we give a list of publicity tasks that the National Committee is responsible for.

Places to publicise Red Rope in your region

Make sure your group is on the local information services databases. For example, your library will usually have a database of local walking and climbing groups. The Thompson's phone directory will enter your group's details for free.

Publicise forthcoming walks and trips in your local press and radio. Local press often have a free *listings* section of local events.

Here are some ideas for places to publicise Red Rope - maybe there are some you hadn't thought of?

Places, noticeboards and events

Bookshops
Cafes
Climbing centres and walls
Community centres
Cultural events and festivals
Outdoor activity centres, leisure centres and swimming pools
Libraries
Outdoor shops
Wholefood shops
Youth Hostels

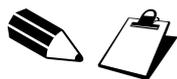
Publications and databases

Community websites
Local newsletters
Local press
Nursery and school newsletters
Public information databases
Thompson's directory
Trade union publications
Walking and climbing publications
Yellow pages

Organisations and groups for exchange mailings

Left-wing political groups
LETS schemes
Other walking and climbing groups
Parents groups
Students' unions
Woodcraft Folk

 *Don't forget to put local contact details on posters and leaflets!*



Tips for writing a press release

See the example press release in this pack →

How do you write a press release?

1. Write 'news release' or 'press release' prominently at the top.
2. Embargos: If a story is very newsworthy an organisation will embargo it. This is a 'ban' on publication of stories or reports based on your press release until a time and date specified by you. It is unlikely that Red Rope would ever need to use an embargo. Normally just put "For immediate use" followed by that day's date. This makes it clear that the release is current.
3. Headline: Don't worry too much about the headline, the press have professional editors who specialise in writing snappy titles. Just find something which sums up the event.
4. First paragraph: Capture the news editor's attention in the first paragraph. This needs to contain the important details of who, what, why, where and when. It also needs to emphasise why the event is newsworthy or worth covering.

Normally the second paragraph would contain a bit more about Red Rope and the story we are promoting and the third paragraph would be mainly quotes. Obviously these aren't hard and fast rules but it tends to work in most circumstances.

In general the release needs to be written so that it could be cut paragraph by paragraph from the bottom and all the remaining paragraphs make sense.

5. At the end of the release put 'ENDS'.
6. Next put the contact details and any notes to editors. These could be details to help the journalist, or some background information. Don't forget a contact name, and ensure that person is practised in explaining the event and can answer all the likely questions. Give phone numbers where they can be contacted at all times.

Who do you send it to?

It is always best to send a press release to a named person. Normally a local newspaper won't have more than a few people working on the newsdesk at one time. This is where all the news is processed. Ring the paper and ask for the newsdesk.

When you get through you don't need to explain the whole story. Explain, for example, that you are calling from a walking club called Red Rope and you want to send them a press release about an event celebrating your 20th anniversary. For whose attention should you make it and what is the fax number?

The best time to call is between 10am and midday. From midday they may be out and about and from mid afternoon onwards they will be writing their stories to a deadline.

You don't have to fax your press release. In fact, if you have several pages it may be best to send it as you can staple them together. Posted press releases are more reliable at getting to the person they are intended for.

Any other tips?

- It is always a good idea to include a quote from a named person.
- Avoid jargon and hyperbole. Make it as relevant as possible to the publication and its reader.
- If possible double-space the lines. This makes it easier for the journalist to write notes on it.
- Try not to make the press release longer than one side of A4. If there are several sheets, make sure they are numbered, e.g. "page 1 of 2" etc. Try and keep it short and to the point. If you have more than one sheet staple them together.



Writing letters to the press

A good way to keep Red Rope in the news is to get a letter published in your local paper or in a specialist magazine.

Letters have a good chance of getting published if:

- they relate to a topical local issue
- they're short and to the point
- they are written by a named individual

If you are confident that your letter represents Red Rope policy, sign your letter 'Red Rope - (region)'. It can be just as effective, however, to express a personal opinion and mention the fact that you are a member of Red Rope in your letter.



Ideas for **social** events

Social Programme - have you got one? Ask yourselves – why did **you** join? At a recent workshop the usual answers were “*To go walking and climbing with like-minded people*” and “*To make new friends*”. Obviously there’s walking & climbing, but a few social meetings as well can help to break the ice for new people. Here are some ideas.

Local film/show or outdoor talk

Leicester Group hired a small hall and a copy of a climbing video, advertised it and sold tickets for the event. This is a good way for members to meet up, as well as for pulling in outdoor people who could be potential Red Rope members.

Evening walks with a drink afterwards

Coventry & Warwickshire Group have monthly evening walks in the summer, with the place and meeting time advertised in the local newspaper *What’s On* listings. It gives people a chance to come on a walk and meet Red Rope without having to come to a meeting.

Slide show or talk

- has anyone in your region been on some interesting expeditions? Could they put on an illustrated slide show? You could combine this with a social.

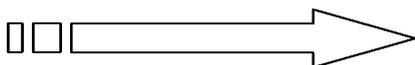
Pub quiz

- enter a team for a local pub quiz or another group’s fundraising quiz.

Social or party - food and drink to share at someone’s house.

Bring along a friend

- encourage members to introduce a friend to your local group. This might sound obvious, but many people have joined Red Rope through friends who said ‘*You really should join Red Rope – you’d have a great time!*’



Following through....

Have a strategy for following through once you've reached people. People want a friendly local contact who can give them information about the club and its activities. How do you follow through and welcome them? Here are a few tips.

- **Answer-phone message** – if your local contact has an answer-phone, think about a short add-on to your usual message to say:

"If this is a new Red Rope enquiry please leave your name and address and we'll send you some information."

that way people will know they've got through to the right number.

- **Keep your local programme and a few key phone numbers by the phone** – there might be a walk or climb coming up that you can mention to your potential new member.
- **Welcome Pack** – put together a short 'Welcome' letter. Send this out to every new contact with a spare copy of the last MIS, a copy of your local programme if you have one, or an invitation to the next regional walk / trip/ social.

 See the example 'Welcome' letter in this pack →

You can photocopy the trip booking / joining form and send that as well, so people can join straight away without cutting up their MIS.

.... and keeping track

- Keep a note of the names and phone numbers of new contacts. It might be worth giving them a call a few weeks after you sent them the 'Welcome' pack.
- When people make contact, ask them where they heard of you and keep a note of it. This is useful information to see which publicity strategies work in your region.
- Do the posters stay up? Are they out of date? Keep a list of where you put publicity and a contact name. Perhaps you could do an annual check, or more often if you need to, so that key places keep up to date. Find out which of your members live near leisure centres and outdoor shops, ask them to check on leaflets and posters each time they visit.

National Publicity

Publicity is best done at a local level, however there are some 'national' tasks that the National Committee takes responsibility for. The following publicity work will be carried out by the National Committee:

- Articles in National Magazines and newspapers
- Maintain a stock of posters and make sure Regional groups know who to get them from
- Make sure that our posters are always up in those 'special' places around the country where walkers and climbers go – cafes and key shops, for example:
 - Wales:* Pete's Eats, outside in Llanberis
 - Peaks:* Grindleford, outside in Hathersage
 - Scotland:* Nevis Sports, the Clachaig, Sligachan pub on Skye
 - Lakes:* Old Dungeon Gill, New Dungeon Gill pubs
 - Pembroke:* St Govan's Inn, Mrs Weston's.
- Advertising in National Outdoor magazines and political publications. Swaps have been done in the past with Red Pepper, Labour Left Briefing, Tribune.
- Put us in the listings sections of the Alternative & Outdoor Press
- Coverage of National Events where climbers, walkers and politically like-minded people go, for example:
 - National Climbing Competition
 - Access demos
 - Mass trespasses

If you're wondering whether a publication or place has been covered, or if you have a good contact for national publicity, please get in touch with the Publicity Secretary (see the latest MIS for details).

Send us your tips

If you have any other ideas that haven't been covered by this pack, or feedback about what works and what doesn't, let the Publicity Secretary know - then we can pass your tips on to other regions and incorporate them in the next version of this pack.